

## Enhancing Go Mandalika Promotion Program

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### ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the Go Mandalika program in promoting tourism in Central Lombok, Indonesia, through five digital media platforms. The ultimate goal is to increase tourist visits to Central Lombok through optimized digital strategies. The method used is descriptive qualitative, which displays quantitative data such as tourism visits and the number of posts for the past three years. Go Mandalika program is designed to increase tourist visits, provide information about tourist destinations, and document the activities of the Central Lombok Tourism Office, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. However, the posting schedule was unscheduled; interaction with followers was still lacking; paid ads did not exist, and collaboration with tourism influencers was rare. A better management model is needed for the Go Mandalika program, and the activeness and usefulness of this program must continue to be improved.

**Keywords:** Digital Media, Social Media, Promotion Program

### ABSTRAK

Tujuan kegiatan ini mengevaluasi efektivitas program Go Mandalika dalam mempromosikan pariwisata di Lombok Tengah, Indonesia, melalui lima platform media digital. Tujuan akhir dari penelitian ini adalah untuk meningkatkan kunjungan wisatawan ke Lombok Tengah melalui strategi digital yang dioptimalkan. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan juga menampilkan data kuantitatif seperti kunjungan wisata dan jumlah postingan selama tiga tahun terakhir. Program Go Mandalika dirancang untuk meningkatkan kunjungan wisatawan, memberikan informasi destinasi wisata, dan mendokumentasikan kegiatan Dinas Pariwisata Lombok Tengah, Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia. Namun, jadwal postingannya tidak terjadwal; interaksi dengan pengikut masih kurang; penggunaan iklan berbayar tidak ada; dan kolaborasi dengan influencer pariwisata masih jarang. Diperlukan model pengelolaan yang lebih baik pada program Go Mandalika, dan keaktifan serta kebermanfaatan program ini harus terus ditingkatkan.

**Kata Kunci:** Media Digital, Media Sosial, Program Promosi

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an essential sector in Indonesia. The role of social media in promoting destinations is increasing daily. Destination image has a positive effect and is significant in terms of influencing purchase decisions. According to Diposumarto *et al.* (2015), the image of a tourism destination significantly influences foreign tourists' purchasing decisions for Bali tourism products.

Digital media promotions, such as websites and social media, are believed to provide convenience for all tourists who want to learn about and explore Indonesia (Priskila, 2019). This aligns with the core principles of marketing, where a practical approach must be based on understanding consumer needs and preferences. Marketing theory emphasizes efforts to understand and meet consumer needs. In marketing, the focus on identifying consumer desires and building a brand image can be applied to promote tourism (Font & McCabe, 2017). Social media, in particular, plays a crucial role in this process, as it allows for direct interaction with consumers, fostering engagement and creating a platform for real-time feedback.

Social media is changing, and the tourism culture has concentrated on backpackers using social media. They even coined a new word, “flashpacker,” to describe a backpacker who relies heavily upon social media in his/her entire travel process before, during, and after travel (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Wibowo *et al.* (2020) found that social media influences the behavior of tourists in choosing and deciding about the attractions they will visit. The study also found that tourists use social media to communicate, looking for tourist references as long as they travel. Social media is important for consumers to acquire information and generate content to communicate with others (Drews & Schemer, 2010).

According to Moriansyah (2015), social media is the right communication tool for organizations, including economic sector companies such as tourism. 70% of tourists use search and research technology when visiting tourist attractions (Demartoto, 2024). Destinations need support from the government, universities, communities, and business people to promote tourist attractions and amenities and assess availability so that electronic word of mouth and destination figures will be created, which tourists will decide to visit (Herman *et al.*, 2018).

Social media are independent and commercial online communities where people congregate, socialize, and exchange views and information (Kotler & Armstrong, 2023). Marketers can engage in social media in two ways: they can use existing social media or set up their own. They can cost-effectively reinforce other communication activities (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

A digital marketing strategy is a combination of many complex areas. About 45% of the world's population uses social media to connect with anyone, from family and friends to celebrities and online personalities (Kusumawardani & Hanggoro, 2019). In tourism, social media can be a highly effective tool for building engagement and promoting destinations more broadly. A reference study used as a basis focuses on the Samarinda Tourism Office's Instagram account, @dispar.samarinda, which has not optimally utilized the available features on Instagram. These features are not fully utilized, impacting the performance of @dispar.samarinda (Tahta & Nusantara, 2022).

Tourism plays an important role in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB/Nusa Tenggara Barat) Province's economy, especially in providing residents jobs and introducing regional culture to tourists. NTB has various tourism potentials, especially in Central Lombok, famous for its beautiful beaches and natural wealth. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the tourism sector in NTB, as evidenced by the drastic decline in tourist arrivals in 2020.

The government then took the initiative to use digital marketing as one of the solutions. This policy was initiated by the minister of tourism and creative economy to be handed down to each region, especially super priority areas, to promote their area so that the Go Mandalika program was born to increase tourist visits and provide information about tourist destinations in Central Lombok. Despite these efforts, the program faced several challenges, such as inconsistent posting schedules and limited interaction with social media followers. There was a noticeable difference between the target and actual number of tourists, especially in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Table 1).

Table 1. Tourist visits to NTB (2019-2023)

Year	Target	Actual
2019	4,000,000	3,706,352
2020	4,400,000	400,595
2021	4,650,000	964,036

2022	4,850,000	1,376,295
2023	5,200,000	-

(Source: RPJMD NTB 2019-2023)

Similarly, Central Lombok shows fluctuations in tourist visit numbers (Table 2).

Table 2. Tourist visits to Central Lombok (2019-2023)

Year	Target	Actual
2019	153,110	147,563
2020	166,206	44,559
2021	30,000	41,156
2022	60,000	104,883
2023	120,000	209,909

(Source: RPJMD Central Lombok 2019-2023)

To address this impact and regain tourist interest, the local government, through the Tourism Office, has launched various promotional strategies, including digital media. The Go Mandalika program itself has five media: Instagram (@GoMandalika), TikTok (@goMandalika), Facebook, YouTube, and a website ([www.gomandalika.com](http://www.gomandalika.com)) run by the Central Lombok Tourism Office.



Figure 1. Go Mandalika logo  
 (Source: Go Mandalika web, 2021)

The study will analyze the effectiveness of five digital media managed by the Central Lombok Tourism Office. They are the Go Mandalika website, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. The findings will be used to design a more effective management model to increase tourist visits. The objectives are to evaluate the effectiveness of the Go Mandalika program in promoting tourism in Central Lombok and to design a more effective digital promotion management model to increase tourist visits to Central Lombok. This highlights a gap in applying effective content management and

consistent interaction with followers on social media within the Go Mandalika program. Therefore, we will evaluate and design a better management model for the Go Mandalika program.

## **METHOD**

It uses descriptive methods with a qualitative approach. A descriptive qualitative statistic is a method based on the philosophy of postpositivism, which is used to examine natural object conditions (Sugiono, 2013). Qualitative studies have sought to understand the complex ethical and moral dilemmas facing travelers who actively want to act more responsibly (Font & McCabe, 2017).

The data in this study are qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative data is data in the form of numbers or graded qualitative data (Sugiyono, 2019). Primary data sources were obtained from related parties at the Central Lombok Tourism Office in the field of promotion and marketing as many as two people, namely Mrs. Lale Lakhsmi and Mrs. Ayu who are responsible for supervising Go Mandalika team and Go Mandalika team, as many as two people as team leaders and design graphic editors. Two content creators use social media through jobs and endorsements, Mrs. Wulan and Mr. Wahid, and two netizens who always watch the Go Mandalika program, Mr. Angga and Mr. Saleh. Secondary data is obtained from document studies and relevant literature sources by reading some basic studies and laws on the management of Go Mandalika promotions and journals and articles discussing Go Mandalika.

Some data collection techniques include interviews, observation, document study, and focus group discussion (FGD). An interview involves an oral question-and-answer interaction to obtain information from the interviewee. Typically, interviewers ask respondents a variety of questions to gather relevant information. The resulting information can be in oral responses, audio recordings, visual recordings, or audiovisual content (Mann, 2016). Interviews were conducted with related parties at the Central Lombok Tourism Office, Go Mandalika social media managers, Go Mandalika Team, influencers, and netizens with eight informants. The type of sample used was purposive sampling.

The content upload process involves social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, with regular frequency and schedule, as well as effective strategies in writing captions and using hashtags. Standards in content creation and uploading include quality in terms of resolution, duration, format, branding consistency, and internal policies to ensure uniform messaging. Analysis of uploaded content is done through various methods such as engagement rate, reach, likes, comments, and shares using analytics tools such as Facebook Insights, Instagram Analytics, YouTube Studio, and TikTok Analytics. The impact of social media is measured by follower growth, audience interaction, engagement levels, and its influence on increasing visitation and awareness of local tourism destinations.

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a form of semi-structured interview that focuses on a predetermined topic and is guided by an expert moderator. FGD is a form of discussion designed to obtain information about participants' wants, needs, viewpoints, beliefs, and experiences (Paramitha, 2013). For the Go Mandalika program, the FGD was conducted by gathering the views of 7 experts in various relevant fields. These experts consist of academics such as lecturer practitioners, Go Mandalika team members, practitioners in the field of social media influencers, and netizens who know the Go Mandalika program. Their input is critical to evaluate the program's impact and effectiveness, identify improvement areas, and make data-driven decisions for future initiatives. By selecting these seven

experts, the FGD aimed to gather well-rounded insights that contribute to the success and improvement of the Go Mandalika program.

Data analysis obtained from the Go Mandalika promotional program uses the Miles and Huberman approach (Miles & Huberman, 2014), which begins with qualitative and quantitative data classification steps. A data matrix will be used to organize observation results, interview findings, and survey data in the data organization process. Miles and Huberman's data selection approach is applied to the qualitative data to identify emerging patterns or themes.

Furthermore, at the analysis stage, data classification and selection results are compared with relevant literature sources and opinions from tourism and information technology experts. This will illustrate the extent to which the findings from the data support or challenge existing concepts that will be applied to verify the results and provide further accuracy.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Go Mandalika Social Media Statistic 2021 to 2024

The following (Table 4) is data that researchers collected using the manual counting method on each account from the beginning of GO Mandalika's formation until mid-2024. Researchers counted the number of posts in each year and tried to compare them with the data in the previous year.

Table 4. Go Mandalika social media posts data 2021-June 2024

No.	Platform	2021	2022	2023	Jun-24	Total	2021-2022 Upgrade	2022-2023 Upgrade
1	Instagram	65	114	156	63	398	75.38%	36.84%
2	Facebook	28	43	77	41	189	53.57%	79.07%
3	TikTok	-	35	31	24	90	-	-11.43%
4	YouTube	9	2	27	21	59	-77.78%	1250%
5	Website	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		102	194	291	159		90.20%	50.00%

(Source: Primary Data, 2024)

Table 4 shows the development of Go Mandalika's social media activities from 2021 to June 2024 on five leading platforms: Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Website. Instagram was the platform with the highest number of posts, reaching 398 posts during the period, followed by Facebook with 189 posts, TikTok with 90 posts, and YouTube with 59 posts. Activity on Instagram showed significant growth from 2021 to 2022 of 75.38%, with slower growth of 36.84% the following year. Meanwhile, Facebook also experienced consistent growth, increasing by 53.57% in 2021-2022 and jumping to 79.07% in 2022-2023. TikTok, although active in 2022 with 35 posts, saw a decline of 11.43% in 2023. On the other hand, YouTube experienced a sharp decline of 77.78% in 2021-2022 but showed a remarkable recovery with 1250% growth in 2022-2023. There is no data regarding activity on the Website during this period. Overall, Go Mandalika's

social media activity saw a significant increase, with a total growth of 90.20% from 2021 to 2022 and 50% from 2022 to 2023.

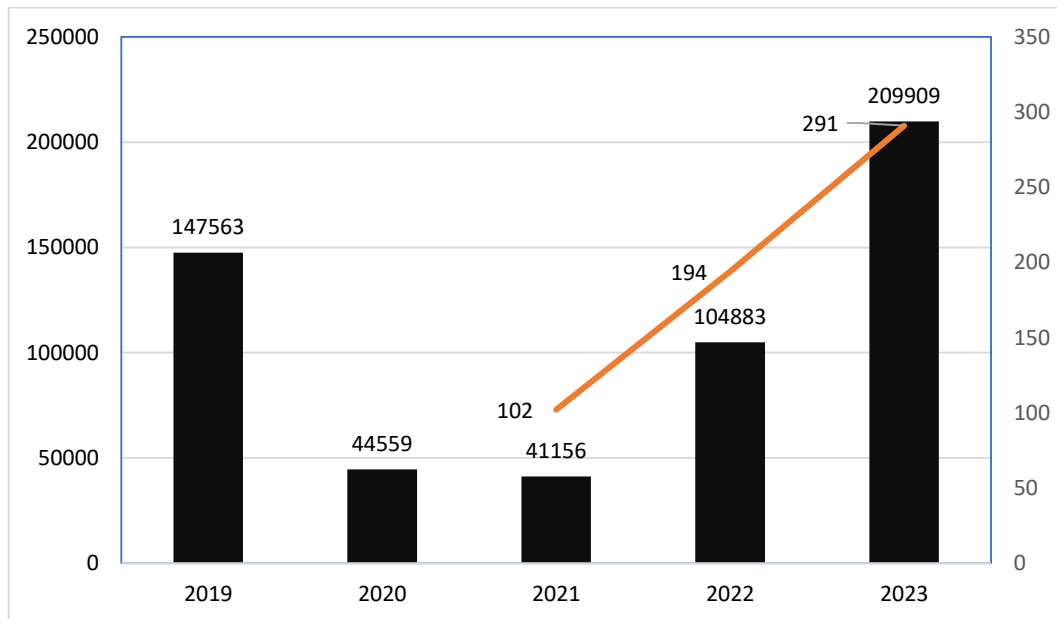


Figure 2. Number of Visits and Frequency of Posts (year)  
 (Source: Primary data, 2023)

Figure 2 shows a positive correlation between the number of social media posts and the number of visits from 2019 to 2023. In 2021, when the number of posts reached 102, visits were recorded at 41,156, then increased significantly to 194 posts with 104,883 visits in 2022. This trend continued until 2023, with 291 posts and 209,909 visits. The increase in the number of posts each year is directly proportional to the increase in the number of visits, indicating that increased social media activity positively impacts the level of visits or interactions from the audience. This graph illustrates the number of tourist visits to Central Lombok (represented by black bars) and the frequency of promotional posts (represented by orange lines) from 2019 to 2023. Initially, the number of tourist visits experienced a significant decline from 147,563 in 2019 to 44,559 in 2020 and 41,156 in 2021. This decline is likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic restricting global movement and tourism. However, starting in 2022, the number of tourist arrivals increased sharply to 104,883 and more than doubled to 209,909 in 2023. This increase indicates a significant recovery in the tourism industry after the impact of the pandemic began to subside.

The frequency of promotional posts also shows an increasing trend, from 102 posts in 2021 to 194 in 2022 and 291 in 2023. This increase reflects more intensive efforts in tourism promotion and marketing. There is a positive correlation between the number of tourist visits and the frequency of posts, where an increase in promotional activities correlates with an increase in the number of tourist visits. Overall, this graph shows that more consistent and intensive promotional efforts can positively impact the number of tourist visits to Central Lombok. By continuing to increase promotional efforts, the potential to attract more tourists in the future is enormous.

### Go Mandalika Promotion Management Model



The Go Mandalika program needs a model to manage this program so that the researchers can provide a model to enhance the performance of the Go Mandalika Program (Figure 3).

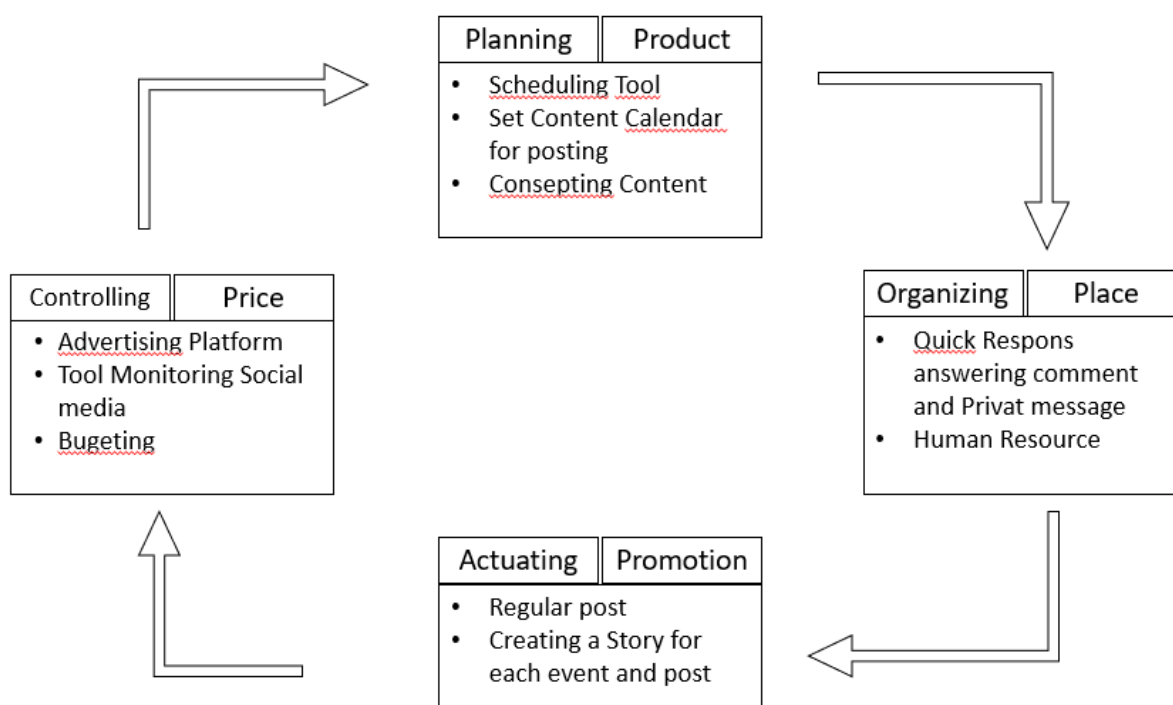


Figure 3. Go Mandalika promotion management model  
 (Source: Primary data, 2024)

Go Mandalika's promotion management model includes clear flows and circular processes to enhance the program. Each point in the model will be explained as follows:

### Planning the Product

Scheduling social media content is very important. The optimized aspect is used to create a posting schedule and utilize the features available on digital media (Mahmudah & Rahayu, 2020). Scheduling helps ensure content is posted consistently, critical to keeping audiences engaged. This consistency helps build expectations and habits among followers so they know when to expect new content. Several technological advances can make it easier for us to schedule social media content as follows;

#### 1. Scheduling tool

The main problem is the uneven scheduling of content on each social media platform. Some posts are posted on Instagram but not on Facebook; some are posted on TikTok but not on Instagram. One of the solutions is to use a scheduling tool that can directly post on several social media at once. Hootsuite and Buffer are both social media management tools, but Hootsuite offers more comprehensive functionality, including monitoring and analytics, while Buffer focuses on scheduling and publishing posts. Social media management tools like Hootsuite and Buffer have significantly improved the efficiency of posting content. Before their arrival, managing multiple social media accounts involved using far slower and less powerful systems (Rowlands

*et al.*, 2011). While both tools allow for one-click scheduling and publishing of posts across various platforms, Hootsuite offers additional functionality, such as monitoring and analytics, making it a more comprehensive solution. In contrast, Buffer focuses on streamlining the scheduling and publishing processes.

## 2. Content calendar

The content calendar can be one of the solutions to an uncertain schedule. This calendar will help organize the posting schedule and prepare the content stock created in advance. The content calendar also functions as a planner so that the agency and Go Mandalika can better prepare the content that will be posted in advance. Planning becomes the first and essential thing. After that, organizing pasting is also necessary as a form of content diversification so that the content posted is not monotonous. Here's an example of a local leaf content calendar.



Figure 4. Content planner example  
 (Source: Localeaf monthly calendar, 2024)

## 3. Concepting the content

The Go Mandalika program leverages social media to promote tourism in Central Lombok, showcasing its natural beauty and cultural richness. The program aims to engage with tourists through Instagram and other platforms by providing updated information about destinations and activities. However, challenges like inconsistent posting and limited interaction hinder its ability to reach its full potential in attracting visitors.

## Organizing the Place

The Go Mandalika program, managed by the Go Mandalika Team, needs enhancement in three key areas: quick responses, the use of chatbots, and improvements in human resources.;

### 1. Quick response

Fast responses on social media are crucial for interaction between users and followers. Go Mandalika has encountered delays in replying to comments on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. Some responses are delayed by one to two days, while others go unanswered due to long wait times. Additionally, messages on Instagram



and TikTok are often filtered, delaying recognition of important inquiries. The admin needs to be more responsive, checking social media every 2-3 hours, especially when there are busy schedules at the Tourism Office. Currently, the Go Mandalika Team focuses on content creation, while the admin from the Tourism Office handles interactions, so better coordination is necessary to improve response times.

## 2. Chatbots

One solution to the interaction problem is implementing chatbots. Chatbots can provide instant responses to direct messages (DMs) and comments. While this is useful, chatbots typically rely on templated replies, so Go Mandalika's admin will still need to follow up personally. Follow-up actions can be conducted via WhatsApp for faster and more personalized responses. Chatbots use artificial intelligence and programming languages to process inputs such as text, sound, and video and can reply in kind. This tool can help streamline the interaction process and improve response times.

## 3. Human resource

The Go Mandalika Team's human resource management needs improvement. Currently, outsourcing through CV. Pituk Angen has led to staffing issues. Hiring individuals with specialized skills for managing each social media platform and website is essential. This will address the current shortage of personnel and ensure better management of the program's online presence.

## Actuating the Promotion

Actuating the promotion of the Go Mandalika program on social media involves consistent posting and crafting stories or concepts behind each post;

### 1. Regular posting

The Go Mandalika program should maintain a regular posting schedule after planning and setting clear goals. The focus should be placed on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, ideal for visual and interactive content. Aim for at least two weekly posts on each platform to keep the audience engaged and ensure visibility.

### 2. Creating a story each event and post

Each post should have a clear concept or narrative that engages the audience and provides value. This storytelling approach will help create a deeper connection with followers and enhance the overall effectiveness of the program's promotions.

## Controlling and Pricing

The Go Mandalika team must monitor social media engagement (likes, shares, comments, views) to assess the effectiveness of their content and guide future content creation. Additionally, the team should allocate a budget for paid advertising on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook to boost posts and reach a broader audience. For controlling and pricing, there are three points of focus: advertising platform, tools for monitoring social media, and budgeting.

### 1. Advertising platform

Advertising is commonplace in digital media as a quick way to increase traffic or the level of visits, likes, and shares on social media. On Instagram Ads, people can create advertisements on Instagram feeds and Instagram and stories according to predetermined targets and budgets (Rahmadanti, 2021). In addition, this Instagram business makes it easier to do ads. With Instagram, business people can immediately promote content created by clicking the promote now button.

a. Google ads:

Google Ads is a digital advertising platform that allows businesses to display ads on Google search results, partner websites, and YouTube. Ads can be text, figure, or video. Google Ads also offers remarketing to reach back to users who have interacted with the website.

b. Facebook ads:

Facebook ads use extensive user data to target ads based on interests, demographics, behavior, and social relationships. Ads can appear in various formats, such as figures, videos, carousels, and collections. It has the advantage of doing detailed and broad targeting, allowing ads to be shown to the most relevant audience. Facebook Ads also allows integration with Instagram Ads for consistent campaigns across both platforms.

2. Social media monitoring tools

Social media monitoring tools now have very various type but several tools for monitoring are recommended:

a. Hootsuite

- Features: Schedule posts, track performance, and engage with followers across multiple social media platforms from a single dashboard.
- Use: Monitor engagement metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and follower growth for each platform used in the Go Mandalika promotion.

b. Social sprout

- Features: Social media scheduling, analytics, and social listening.
- Use: Gain insights into how the audience interacts with the content, track sentiment, and measure the impact of influencer collaborations.

c. Buffer

- Features: Content planning, scheduling, and analytics.
- Use: Schedule regular posts and analyze their performance to optimize content strategy.

3. Budgeting

Setting the proper budget is key to a successful advertising campaign. The agency should set aside a special fund for advertising, the cost of which depends on the annual meeting.

## CONCLUSION

Enhancing the promotional management of the Go Mandalika program in Central Lombok requires a strategic approach that involves understanding the current state of transformation and social media statistics. This baseline will provide a starting point for the enhancement efforts. Given that the Go Mandalika program utilizes four social media platforms and one website, each with unique optimization requirements, a detailed breakdown of these platforms is essential.

First, post more often (schedule): For optimal engagement and visibility, increasing the frequency of posts across all platforms is crucial. This strategy should be applied consistently on TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Go Mandalika website. A well-planned posting schedule will help maintain a steady online presence, ensuring the audience remains engaged. Second, ads should be used to boost posts. To expand the reach of Go Mandalika's promotional content, advertising should be utilized on TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. These platforms offer targeted ad options to help the program connect with a broader audience. The content will gain more visibility by boosting posts through ads, which is essential for increasing engagement and attracting new followers.

Third, increase interaction with followers: Building a strong community requires active engagement with the audience. Go Mandalika should prioritize responding to comments and messages and fostering discussions on TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. This interaction strengthens the relationship with current followers and encourages new users to join the community, enhancing the program's reach and impact. Fourth, create collaborative content with others: Collaboration is a powerful tool for content creation. By partnering with influencers, organizations, or other relevant entities, Go Mandalika can produce content that resonates with a larger audience. This strategy is particularly effective on TikTok and Instagram, where collaborative content can lead to higher engagement and more followers. The shared content benefits all parties involved and expands the program's influence.

Regular virtual Zoom or Google Meet meetings can keep the team aligned and promptly address issues. Additionally, creating an efficient content creation and approval process with a streamlined workflow and collaborative tools can help meet social media deadlines. Addressing resource constraints by hiring additional staff or freelancers during peak periods can further alleviate the workload, ensuring smooth operations and timely task execution. For the lack of gear, the tourism office must create an agreement to provide new gear or create an RAB or begetting for buying new gear.

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